



## AREERA State Plans of Work

**T**his Plan of Work (POW) Newsletter is focused solely on answering the most frequently asked questions about POW reporting and using the POW software. The questions are those we receive from our State Partners' perspectives, but the information can still be helpful to NIFA National Program Leaders who want to learn about and understand how the states are reporting on certain POW/AR sections.

**Q: I can't log into the portal – Can you reset my password?**

A: No, but you can yourself. Now that POW is housed within the NIFA Reporting Portal, NIFA staff has no control over resetting passwords. If you cannot remember your password, click the link on the portal login page that says "reset password," and a new password will be sent to the email address we have on file. Or, if you are logging in okay but want to change your password, change your name, etc., you can click "edit account" at the top right hand corner of your homepage once you log into the Portal.

**Q: Why can I log into portal but am not recognized as a user (i.e. there is no "Welcome Name" message and no POW Application Link)?**

A: This could simply be a case of needing to clear your cache and delete your cookies. If you do this and the problem is not resolved, then please email [pow@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:pow@nifa.usda.gov) or call Katelyn Sellers at 202-401-5482.

**Q: After I log into Portal and click the POW link, I can see my homepage but some (or none) of the POWs or ARs I'm assigned to show up – why?**

A: This is problem with NIFA's assignment of you as to the correct POW/AR(s). Please email

[pow@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:pow@nifa.usda.gov), and we will usually have it resolved on the same business day.

**Q: I have been going back and forth between using the production site of POW (official) and the training site, but how do I know for sure which one I'm in at any given point?**

A: You will know for sure based on the URL. The training version will have a URL that says "training" in it:

<https://training-portal.pow.usda.gov>.

The production website will simply be:

<https://portal.pow.usda.gov>.

**Q: What is the definition we should use for direct and indirect contacts?**

A: Direct contacts are when both the educator or information disseminator and the client/receiver are linked together at the same time and/or place (phone conversation, field days, demonstration, seminars, workshops, etc.). Example: 100 people attend a workshop given by an extension agent, so that is 100 direct contacts made. An indirect contact usually precludes interaction. Just about any time you don't know exactly who is viewing or reading your information is an indirect contact. So, newsletters, radio, TV, and internet broadcasts are usually considered indirect contacts. Example: You can send newsletters to 1000 people, but you can't be sure it is being read by everyone. Thus, that is 1,000 indirect contacts made.

**Q: What is an FTE and what type of personnel/staff should be included in an FTE?**

A: Full-Time Equivalent (FTE). One professional FTE is approximately 2,080 hours of staff time annually allocated to support program activities. Professional FTEs include the *professional* program

staff, administration, communications, and other professional staff for extension, and scientists (SYs) and professional staff (PYs) for research (support, secretarial, paraprofessional, and clerical staff should NOT be included for either extension or research). In the POW Overview Section, you should include all FTEs expected to be expended on the Planned Programs regardless of source of funding. FTEs in that section are only used to determine the total level of effort. In the Planned Programs Section, you should report FTEs only along the funding lines included in the POW (Hatch, Smith Lever 3b&c, Evans-Allen, 1890 Extension). It is important that the FTEs indicated in the Planned Programs show only the level of effort from those funding lines so that NIFA can calculate that effort as a percentage of the whole (which you reported in the overview section).

***Q: How are we supposed to report volunteer time in the new “volunteer” box in the Annual Report under the “inputs” section of each Planned Program?***

A: The box listed directly under the Professional FTE box for each planned program should be filled in with the equivalent FTEs of volunteer time (i.e. number of volunteer hours divided by 2,080 hours). Thus, the number you list in the box should NOT be number of volunteers or number of volunteer hours. It should be the number of volunteer hours converted into the equivalent of FTEs (think of the number as “Volunteer FTEs,” similar to how you would “Professional FTEs”).

***Q: Is the new volunteer box (see above) mandatory to fill in? And, if we fill it in, should we refrain from reporting volunteer time in our own state-defined outputs?***

A: No, it is not mandatory, and states will not be penalized in any way for leaving the default “0” in the box. This new box was added per request from the 2010 Panel of Experts, who agreed that states should have a formal mechanism in the AR for reporting volunteer time if they collect it and wish to report it. As for state defined outputs, the guidance above for how to report volunteer time only refers to the new “volunteer” box in the inputs section of each planned program. *The*

*state-defined outputs section is and always will be what YOU decide you want to report as an output and how to define it (i.e. number of volunteers or number of volunteer hours). Thus, some states might choose to report volunteer FTEs in the new box AND fill in their own state defined outputs associated with volunteer time, while others may choose to report one or the other.*

***Q: Why can't I delete Programs in our Annual Report?***

A: We cannot allow for planned programs in an Annual Report that are generated from a POW two years back to be deleted entirely. We *can* allow for edits (such as name changing, KAs, etc.) because even with such edits, NIFA can still relate that edited program back to the original in the POW and account for what a state actually did compared to what they said they'd do. This is the nature of the law of the AREERA Act. If NIFA allowed for states to entirely delete old programs (even if they're no longer relevant), we'd have no record of what happened between what they said they'd do with what they actually did. So, even if a program is obsolete when you are filling out your AR, the program needs to stay there, and then you can choose to put a statement in the activities section stating what happened (i.e. Are those activities in a new program? Did priorities in the state change due to unforeseen circumstances - funding, natural disasters, etc. - that caused you to use your resources on a completely new planned program?). You may also simply state “No longer reporting on this Program.”

**Contact & Resource Information**

Past newsletters can be found at:

[http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/reporting/planrept/pow\\_newsletters.html](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/reporting/planrept/pow_newsletters.html).

Visit our website homepage at:

<http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/reporting/planrept/plansofwork.html>

**For more information on the Plan of Work, e-mail the POW Staff at [pow@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:pow@nifa.usda.gov), or call Katelyn Sellers, 202-401-5482.**